



Commonwealth of Kentucky Energy and Environment Cabinet

Steve Beshear, Governor

Leonard K. Peters, Secretary

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Gov. Beshear Proclaims September ‘Disaster Preparedness Month’ *Division of Water can help with preparedness planning*

FRANKFORT, Ky. (Sept. 24, 2014) – Governor Steve Beshear has declared September “Disaster Preparedness Month” in Kentucky. The theme for this year’s National Preparedness Month is “Be Disaster Aware, Take Action to Prepare.” As communities begin preparing for America’s PrepareAthon! on Sept. 30, the Division of Water (DOW) reminds Kentuckians that DOW is a resource that can help them prepare for the next emergency or natural disaster.

Kentucky is prone to natural hazards such as flooding, tornadoes, earthquakes and landslides, and DOW plays an important role in helping citizens and communities prepare for these emergencies in their homes, businesses and schools. The DOW administers much of Kentucky’s critical water infrastructure, such as drinking water systems, wastewater treatment plants, dams, water supplies and flood management. Many of these programs’ actions directly support the National Preparedness Month activities.

“Flooding is Kentucky’s leading natural disaster, causing more than \$43 million in damage annually,” said Peter Goodmann, DOW director. “Kentucky’s nearly 90,000 miles of rivers and streams provide a valuable natural resource for citizens and communities in the Commonwealth, but there are inherent risks associated with these waters. It is common during flood events for water treatment systems, wastewater treatment plants, and even dams and water supplies to be affected by floodwaters.”

Kentucky Emergency Management Director Michael Dossett cited a recent flash-flooding event to highlight preparedness planning. “Citizens of our Commonwealth need only recall the recent August flooding in Prestonsburg and the extensive damage to surrounding areas to be reminded of the need for constant planning and evaluation of flood-prone areas.”

Protecting water quality and providing safe drinking water is essential to ensuring healthy, resilient communities. Planning for and protecting water infrastructure is an important part of preparedness planning.

Knowing where the hazard-prone areas in your community are located is critical in planning for catastrophic events and major service interruptions. DOW has tools and resources that can

assist communities in developing their disaster preparation plans. The division's subject matter experts can help communities in identifying hazard areas such as floodplains and dam inundation zones, as well as critical infrastructure that is essential to a community's well-being.

Kentuckians considering a disaster plan should ask themselves the following questions:

- Do you live or work in a flood zone or dam inundation zone?
- Are you protected by a levee system?
- If you or your community encounters flooding during an evacuation, do you have an alternate route?
- What happens if your water or wastewater treatment system, or the public water supply source, is damaged or lost during a disaster?

Taking action to prepare for disasters is vital to ensuring the economic viability and resilience of individuals and communities. DOW is a resource for providing technical assistance and guidance to those communities doing preparedness planning. For more information regarding National Preparedness Month, visit www.ready.gov/september. For information regarding DOW's role and resources available for assistance visit <http://water.ky.gov> or contact Carey Johnson at Carey.Johnson@ky.gov.

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